

the Range Forest Officer there also informed me of a bird ring with a local hunter. We later collected the ring, and to our surprise found that the inscription was similar to the one collected in Seijusa, about 300 km away. Enquiry with the hunter yielded no information, except that he had seen two black birds together in the river when the ringed bird was shot.

On returning from Arunachal Pradesh, I learnt from Dr. Taej Mundkur, of Wetlands International – Asia Pacific, that the rings belonged to the National Bird Banding Centre (NBBC) in China. Ms Hou Yunqiu and Mr. Qian Fawen of NBBC were contacted, and they informed me that the rings belonged to great cormorants ringed at Qinghai Hu (Hu = Lake), Qinghai Province (36° 54' N, 99° 54' E), which is about 1,200 km as the crow flies from the localities in Arunachal Pradesh where the rings were recovered.

Further, when the recoveries were reported to the Bombay Natural History Society, I learnt that two researchers, Hillaljiyoti Singha and S. Sivakumar had also recovered a ring from a great cormorant on April 3, 2000. A fisherman had caught the bird in the Torsa river near Shuktabari, 17 km from Koch (Cooch) Bihar, West Bengal State. This ring also belonged to the NBBC and the bird was ringed at Qinghai Hu.

The subspecies *P.c. sinensis* is known to occur throughout China, and the northern breeding birds there are reported to winter south

of the Yangtze and on Hainan and Taiwan (Meyer De Schauensee 1984). With the ring recoveries of the Qinghai birds, it appears that some populations also winter in India, entering the Subcontinent via the eastern flyway across the Eastern Himalaya. Very little information is available on migration routes in Northeast India, but the Brahmaputra and its tributaries are thought to form a flyway for birds from Northeast Asia (Grimmett *et al.* 1998).

How far these birds move south is not known, but the majority of them could possibly be wintering in the Assam plains. The Kaziranga National Park, a Ramsar site along the river Brahmaputra, supports a large number of migratory birds. Great cormorants are found there throughout the year but the numbers are higher in winter, suggesting a definite migratory supplement (Maan Barua, pers. comm.). It is not clear whether the movement of these Chinese-ringed cormorants is an annual feature, or a dispersal or nomadic movement. Further studies and ring recoveries of great cormorants from the region are required to establish their movements.

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#### 4. RECOVERY OF A RINGED DEMOISELLE CRANE *GRUS VIRGO* IN KUTCH

During a routine survey in February, 1999, one of us (MHT) found a dead demoiselle crane,

*Grus virgo* Linn., on Ratnal Tank (23° 17' N, 70° 01' E) with the ring number Moskwa B-270 915.

In correspondence with the Moscow Ringing Centre, we came to know that this bird was ringed as a pullet on 23.vii.1989 at Lake Barun-Torey of Russia, Chita O (50° 05' N, 115° 40' E). The bird had travelled 4,917 km and was found dead after 3,115 days (about eight and a half years) in Kutch.

Earlier, Dr. Taej Mundkur had collected a demoiselle crane with a ring at Nyrari Reservoir in Rajkot, Gujarat on February 10, 1992, which had been ringed on 11.vii.1990 near Barun-Torey Lake in Russia (Mundkur 1992).

We thank the Moscow Ringing Centre for providing us with the relevant details.

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#### 5. FIRST RECORD OF LESSER FLORICAN *SYPHEOTIDES INDICA* (MILLER) FROM KEOLADEO NATIONAL PARK, BHARATPUR, RAJASTHAN

A male lesser florican, *Sypheotides indica* in breeding plumage was sighted in the grassland of Keoladeo National Park (27° 7.6' to 27° 12.2' N and 77° 29.5' to 77° 33.2' E), Rajasthan, India, at around 0830 hrs on June 19, 2000.

The bird was identified by its black and white plumage, with a tuft of narrow ribbon-like black feathers behind the head, three on either side. It was sighted in the grassland of Block-G (locally called Koladehar), dominated by two grass species, namely *Vetiveria zizanioides* and *Desmostachya bipinnata*. Koladehar is the major grassland habitat spread over c. 3 sq. km in the southeast part of the Park. The grass was green, with an average height of 50 cm. We saw the bird for about half an hour without binoculars, as it was just 15 m away. It could not be located again in the same area during the next two days of intensive search.

The lesser florican breeds during the southwest monsoon, which begins by the end of June or early July in western Gujarat, eastern Rajasthan, western Madhya Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh (Sankaran and Manakadan 1990, Sankaran *et al.* 1992). This is the time when the males return

to the breeding grounds. They are known to move from the breeding grounds immediately after nesting, into peninsular India (Ali and Ripley 1983). The dispersal areas are still not known. The bird sighted in the Park could be in transit to the breeding ground and was probably using Keoladeo National Park as a staging ground. The nearest known breeding grounds of the species are more than 300 km southwest of the Park (in Tonk, Ajmer, Bhilwara and Pali districts of Rajasthan). There have been sightings of breeding males in transit towards western India during June, July and August from Karera Bustard Sanctuary in northern Madhya Pradesh where they did not display, and breeding has not yet been recorded from the region (Sankaran *et al.* 1992).

The lesser florican is among the smallest bustards of the world and is endemic to India. Once ranging from Punjab, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh in central India to Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu in the south (Ali and Ripley 1995), it is now restricted to Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh. In recent years, the bird has become very rare (Sankaran *et al.* 1992).